

Visit the sick & needy

A 'security plan' for today

Since its organization, the Church has been admonished through the revelations of the Lord to be mindful of the needy and the unfortunate.

Typical of the many revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith concerning the welfare of the saints are these words of the Lord given in 1834:

"I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

"And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.

"But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.

"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

"Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment." (D&C 104:14-18.)

During the early settlements of the saints in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, each community established was made self-sustaining. This same spirit continued during the westward migration and the colonization of the intermountain valleys. Principles of brotherhood, thrift, honesty, and industry, as enunciated in the teachings of the gospel, were rugged virtues that enabled the early pioneers to found communities and institutions and build a self-reliant people who were concerned about the welfare of all.

But with the advancements of civilization, life among the Latter-day Saints became more complex and the methods of dealing with economic and community problems changed to meet new conditions.

Then, when the great depression that began in 1929 engulfed the world in financial panic, many who had been employed for years were thrown out of work. Savings and resources of those who were unemployed vanished, and there were widespread conditions of serious want and distress. The federal government undertook to give relief to the unemployed and the needy, and spent millions of dollars to finance make-work projects, which were often only temporary.

Many wards and stakes of the Church attempted to put together relief programs to aid the needy, but at best these were limited in their scope.

Thus it was that in 1935, the First Presidency, recognizing the dire circumstances of many members, made a Church-wide survey to ascertain the relief conditions of the members. Results of this survey were carefully studied by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, who, under inspiration, formulated a plan that was introduced at the annual conference of the Church in April 1936, as the "Church Security Plan." Later, at April conference in 1938, the name was changed to the Church Welfare Plan.

This inspired plan has provided unemployment relief by feeding, clothing, and housing needy Church members. But at the same time it sought to find employment for those capable of labor, and has offered progressive improvement to those involved. Through the welfare plan were developed farms, dairies, orchards, canneries, and a multitude of other production projects to provide both work opportunities and commodities. A network of bishop's storehouses were provided to receive the commodities and help local leaders distribute them to those with verified needs.

For half a century now the welfare program of the Church has blessed countless members in need and, in many cases, non-members throughout the world who have been the victims of catastrophes or natural disasters. Even though the inner-workings of the program have been changed or modified from time to time to meet current needs, the basic principles of Church welfare have not changed.

The program operates close to the people through bishops and Relief Society presidents. It dignifies and glorifies work, and teaches self-reliance. Families are responsible for their own members before Church assistance is given. Provident living and self-reliance are the responsibilities of every Church member. Tithing and fast offering donations are to be given freely. Compassionate service is stressed as a fundamental expression of the gospel of love.

After five decades of helping members to help themselves, the welfare program still continues as a "security plan" for all of us today. It continues as President Heber J. Grant said of it in 1936, "... to invite another out of the shade and cold of penury and discouragement into the sunshine of kindness and brotherly love." (*Improvement Era*, December 1936.)

A THOUGHT FROM THE SCRIPTURES

And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord. — D&C 68:28

"Walking uprightly before the Lord includes becoming a responsible individual in all aspects of life," said Presiding Bishop Victor L. Brown in his October 1982 welfare session address. He said students should take courses that will prepare them for

further schooling or employment.

"Parents should also teach their children to use financial resources wisely, to stay out of debt, to take pride in their own appearance and in the appearance of their surroundings, to be dependable, to give a full day's work for a full day's pay, and many other principles of welfare services."

ur family get the eral conference

messages and that with us as we listen. s of a small branch one hour to see the y to stay for Saturday ions, which keeps us e for about nine hours ve five children, ages not benefit from con-

ference-if we don't anticipate every-one's needs for the day.

Consequently, we try to make the following practical preparations:

— Make sure the younger children take only a few quiet things with them.

— Arrive early and sit near the

front, on the first row if possible.

— Nudge the children when we notice something that might interest them, such as the prophet, a General Authority we have a special interest in, or an interesting story a speaker is telling.

— Take a special lunch to eat between sessions.

Advance preparation makes the day go smoothly, and the follow-up is to read the conference messages when they appear later in the *Ensign*.

— Linda Brueck, Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, Ala.

WRITE TO US:

April 20 "How to keep household costs down."

April 27 "How to prepare for medical, financial, emotional challenges of aging."

May 4 "How to safeguard children from being abducted."

May 11 "How to become more organized."

May 18 "How to benefit from regular temple attendance."

May 25 "How to help a gifted child."

Have you had good experiences or practical success in any of the above subjects? Share them with our readers in about 100-150 words. Write the "How-to" editor, Church News, P.O. Box 1257, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110. Contributions may be edited or excerpted and will not be returned. Material must be received at least 12 days before publication date.

gether on television. We also listen to radio broadcasts. Now that the girls are growing up, they have chosen to tie quilts for their trousseaus during conference. They also love to go to Salt Lake City with their grandparents and attend conference. — Mary Jane Fritzen, Idaho Falls, Idaho

Be alert, attentive

Plan to take the time to be attentive when hearing conference at home, the same as you would be if there in person or at a Church building. Take a seat and avoid trying to listen while carrying on normal daily activities. Take notes of talks that seem to be "especially for me at this time." Review again by reading talks when they are printed in the *Ensign*. — Kenneth N. Romrell, Caldwell, Idaho

How-to checklist:

1 Emphasize reverence and attentiveness.

2 Involve children, have them identify and learn about speakers.

3 Make conference a special occasion by emphasizing importance.

4 Take notes of talks, then re-read and review what was taught.

Involve children

Soon after being baptized, I was called to be organist on the stake Primary board. I attended the Primary general conference in Salt Lake City and stayed to attend general conference.

I was touched by the spirit when President N. Eldon Tanner spoke, and knew he was truly a man of God. Because of that experience, I now encourage my children to listen to conference talks. When we go to our stake meetinghouse to watch the live television sessions, I hand each older child a paper and a pen. Each one is to listen and write down the name of each speaker and his topic. The younger ones draw a picture representing each topic.

When we return home, we look at a picture of the General Authorities, and I have each child point to his favorite speaker. We then talk about each one and the prophet. I find each child looks forward to conference. — Beverly Hart, Lafayette, Calif.

Pass on information

The best thing to do is not to plan something else that conflicts. Set aside time so you can attend all the sessions at Church or watch on television. We try to take some notes and not just sit and listen. We then try to pass on the information to people who may have missed.

We try to teach the children that it's an actual Church meeting and that they should be reverent and pay attention. Sometimes I look at past conferences to get an idea what the themes were and to see if the speakers follow up on it in this one. — Steven G. Smith, Mesa, Ariz.